



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Statement on Sheriff Lee Baca's Retirement**

Like many, I was surprised to hear about Sheriff Lee Baca's decision to retire. I applaud the Sheriff, however, for taking a step he firmly believes to be in the best interest of the men and women who work in the department.

The mantra for our county, however, does not change with his impending departure: Reform is essential for a department that has been wracked by one crisis after another.

In addition to the recent appointment of veteran prosecutor Max Huntsman as inspector general of the Sheriff's Department, the time has come for Los Angeles County to establish a permanent citizen's oversight commission.

Los Angeles County is simply behind the times on this front. Several cities in this country, from New York to Los Angeles, have commissions to oversee law enforcement departments to ensure constitutional policing in our jails and communities.

For public confidence to be restored there must be singularly focused independent civilian oversight. This oversight is essential to make reforms and bring forth an open process to allegations of misconduct and to avoid jail scandals, committee inquiries and federal investigations.

Citizens and advocates for reform repeatedly have issued clarion calls for meaningful participation in policing the county's largest sheriff's department in the

nation. The commission must have the power to ensure that its members' voices are heard and that a true partnership with the public exists.

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